

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A vehicle control apparatus, comprising:

5 antenna means for communicating with an authentication information storage unit having stored therein authentication information used to authenticate a user of a vehicle;

retaining means provided in said vehicle and disposed in spaced apart relationship with said antenna means at a predetermined distance to retain said authentication information storage unit; and

10 control means for selectively outputting a first control signal to control a predetermined first device and a second control signal to control a predetermined second device based on said authentication information received by said antenna means, and in which

15 said control means is operative to output said first control signal to said first device under the condition that a lock of said vehicle is locked and said authentication information is matched with predetermined authentication information, and output said second control signal to said second device under the condition that said authentication information is matched with predetermined authentication information after said lock of said vehicle is unlocked and said authentication information storage unit is retained by
20 said retaining means.

2. A vehicle control apparatus as set forth in claim 1, in which

25 said antenna means is operative to supply electric power to said authentication information storage unit to drive said authentication information storage unit.

3. A vehicle control apparatus as set forth in claim 1 or claim 2, in which

said antenna means is constituted by a film type antenna.

30 4. A vehicle control apparatus as set forth in any one of claims 1 through 3, in which

said antenna means is provided in an outwardly exposed mirror unit forming part of said vehicle.

35 5. A vehicle control apparatus as set forth in any one of claims 1 through 3, in which

said antenna means is provided in an outwardly exposed sun visor forming part

of said vehicle.

6. A vehicle control apparatus as set forth in any one of claims 1 through 5, in which

5 said authentication information storage unit is constituted by an electronic driver license.

7. A vehicle unlocking system, comprising:

a vehicle control apparatus as set forth in any one of claims 1 through 6; and

10 a vehicle unlocking device operative to unlock a lock of said vehicle upon receiving said first control signal.

8. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in claim 7, further comprising:

15 an engine start permitting device operative to permit an engine forming part of said vehicle to start upon receiving said second control signal.

9. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in claim 7 or claim 8, further comprising:

20 an in-vehicle telephone permitting device operative to permit an in-vehicle telephone device to be used upon receiving said second control signal.

10. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in any one of claims 7 through 9, further comprising:

25 an in-vehicle audio permitting device operative to permit an in-vehicle audio device to be used upon receiving said second control signal.

11. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in any one of claims 7 through 10, further comprising:

30 a combination meter permitting device operative to permit a combination meter device to be used upon receiving said second control signal.

12. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in any one of claims 7 through 11, further comprising:

35 an emergency calling permitting device operative to permit an emergency calling device to be used upon receiving said second control signal.

13. A vehicle unlocking system as set forth in any one of claims 7 through 12, further comprising:

a road-to-vehicle communication permitting device operative to permit a road-to-vehicle communication device to be used upon receiving said second control
5 signal.